APPENDIX II

Allan Shiach and Chris Dobson

Biography of Allan Shiach aka Allan Scott (2016)

The principal of Rafford Films and Rafford Productions is Allan Scott (real name Allan Shiach), who was born in Elgin, Moray, and educated at Gordonstoun School and McGill University, Montreal, where he obtained a B.A. in English Literature. His father was a lawyer who served as a Captain in the Intelligence Corps; only three years back from war service, he died aged 36 in a car accident. Scott was eight years old at that time and recalls the day in The Bravest Man I Ever Saw, published in the magazine of The Institute of Contemporary Scotland along with a small number of other memoirs (Including The Medallion, available online, a short essay on the death of his brother.)

During his time at McGill he partnered in a comedy act with a lecturer from the law faculty, Chris Bryant (real name Christopher Dobson). Their routines were talent spotted and Scott and Bryant quickly became an established part of the Montreal nightlife scene. Their first professional performances took place at the then legendary Montreal nightclub, El Morocco where they shared the stage with several high-profile US performers of the period (early 1960s). It was on their second performance that they were seen by Hollywood superstar Charlton Heston whose loudly pronounced enthusiasm for their act led within days to their becoming booked as performers on a US nightclub circuit.

Their two-man act, highly influenced by Flanders & Swann and Beyond the Fringe, sought to advance the art of the sketch, of political satire, and of the narrow-lapel tuxedos which was their uniform. Their performances earned them a stage of their own in the tiny theatre upstairs at Montreal landmark, the Café Andre in the heart of the city, where they gained a crossover following for their nightly shows. For a Dean's List student, extra curricular activities of this kind were formally frowned upon and this is why Allan Shiach, as he was born, chose the patriotic pseudonym of Scott to conceal his activities from the faculty. Only 20 when he graduated, Scott together with Bryant began to tour the US, playing in half a dozen of the best-known clubs of the day -- the Blue Angel and the Versailles Room in New York, the Twin Trees in Dallas, as well as clubs in the mid-west and west coast. Good reviews in Variety and local papers gave them a fine reputation for "low key" comedy and this in turn led to an invitation from the CBC to write and perform a weekly 90-minute late night show, emanating from Ottawa.

Produced by Patrick Watson, with whom they formed a lifelong friendship, the CBC's "A Late Evening with Scott and Bryant" blazed a trail for improvisational TV. The station announcer was a young man called Alex Trebek, subsequently to gain national fame as the decades-long host of "Jeopardy!" Incidental music on the show was performed by a talented trio of musicians who lived nearby - the Oscar Peterson Trio. They claim a few TV firsts including learning enough

Russian to appear with 60 images of themselves in Russian army uniform, simulating an army choir singing "Kalinka" lip-synched to the real Russian army choir. Also, having discovered a talented woman who made extraordinarily lifelike puppets and using the offscreen skills of soon-to-be-famous voice impersonator Rich Little, they "interviewed" world statesmen and women, movie legends and local political figures in a kind of hallucinatory reality. Little's eerily accurate impersonations and the puppets' mind-bending realism were an original way of putting the wrong words in real peoples' mouths for the purposes of satire.

The show itself was a kaleidoscope of sketches, interviews, conversations and music. Over the two seasons of its run, regular appearances by Victor Borge, Rowan and Martin and various other performers graced the occasionally amusing and of wayward 90 minutes of entertainment. One edition, when money for the series had run out, was confined entirely to the studio and conversation with a bikini-clad beauty, a shameless piece of sexism for which they were quite rightly ignored.

Scott said of this period: "In my early twenties, we were earning a preposterous amount of money, having an unfeasible amount of fun and we were nationally known TV performers in the days before celebrities were invented. My life since has been a long, slow slide downwards from that pinnacle."

They toured their act briefly to London, appearing at venues which no longer exist including The Establishment Club where Scott met his actress wife, Kathleen. During a summer break, they departed for Australia on a contract that called for them to write, direct, perform or do anything their employers legally required. This turned out to include 10 afternoon shows a week, two late evening shows a week, co-writing a sitcom, and performing as the warm-up act for a rock group. They returned to London and announced their retirement as performers.

Bryant returned briefly to the law, working for a time as assistant to the Canadian attorney general Hon. Davie Fulton. Questions were at one point raised in the Canadian Parliament about a cabinet minister with a comedian as his assistant, but the matter was not pursued.

Scott worked solo as a writer for radio and television in the US and the UK while also, following on previous training in the Scotch whisky industry, served as a non-executive director of Macallan-Glenlivet plc. The whisky company was located a few miles from his family home in Scotland and he retained his directorship over the next several years. The TV shows included two BBC-TV series for then current pop stars, Cliff Richard and Adam Faith. The latter remained a friend until his death.

Now based in London, the two worked together again in the seventies. By this time Scott was writing and presenting an influential radio series called The Public Ear for the BBC. Bryant co-wrote some of these and then the pair branched out, writing for a range of others in almost all media except film. However they did attempt to write a spec screenplay and this was sold for the satisfyingly substantial sum of two thousand pounds. They were encouraged to remain in the field as they saw this script change hands several times, on each occasion the new owners

paying more and more to acquire rights. When it last changed hands at seventy thousand pounds, Scott and Bryant (who had only ever received the initial sum) learned a valuable lesson and got themselves an agent.

Several years of partnership writing followed. Screenplays, radio plays, theatre and comedy series all flowed. A Mystery Writers of America award and a Writers' Guild Award encouraged them; a series written for the British comedy star, Arthur Haynes, taught them about hard work. Their adaptation of an Italian farce, Baked Beans and Caviar, was produced at The Windsor Theatre Royal.

Starring the brilliant Arthur Lowe and following a triumphant production in Italy and Paris, they hoped this might be their ticket to the big time. Scott remembers: "It was a beautifully constructed farce and Lowe was magnificent. We attended every performance prior to opening night to the same experience - at the end of the first act, we knew we had a hit; at the end of the second act, the laughter and applause guaranteed a triumph. And the audience left quietly at the end of the third act."

Despite every effort, the third act remained unfixable and thus, chastened by their theatre experience, they returned to writing screenplays. In the nature of this business, they wrote three or four scripts for every project which was actually filmed. Their first script to be filmed was The Man Who had Power Over Women, based on the novel by Gordon Williams. In a dispute with the film's director (John Krish) and its American producer (Judd Bernard) they asked to have their credit removed and registered the pseudonym Andrew Meredith. (Other pseudonyms they adopted in later years included, for a German producer, Rupert Behr and Tom Katz.)

Other films they wrote during this time included The Awakening, Mike Newell's directorial debut and starring their former fan, Charlton Heston, a piece of hocus-pocus based on a novel by Bram Stoker. The head of production at Warner Brothers met with the writers to discuss their ideas for the script and remarked to them that the biggest problem he foresaw as they started writing was "the issue of exposition and conveying the main dramatic premises." It was such a peculiar observation that the writers merely acknowledged the wisdom of the insight and went on to discuss other matters.

Some weeks later, with work now begun they looked at the studio's coverage -- a synopsis and analysis of the material, in this case an unpublished manuscript. Sure enough, there amidst the reader's comments was the remark: "the greatest hurdle in adapting this for the screen lies in the difficulty of conveying exposition and the main dramatic premises." But why had the studio reader thought this when in fact it was very straightforward.

The mystery was solved when someone pointed to the date of the coverage: 1926. A difficult story to explain in the era of silent movies. And a wisdom no longer applicable half a century later.

The Girl from Petrovka was their next film, an early Goldie Hawn vehicle featuring a screen debut for Anthony Hopkins – an interesting attempt to convey life in contemporary Russian under Brezhnev, which was fatally sentimentalized and despite Hawn's dazzling performance did little business. And then came Don't Look Now. The pair were commissioned to write a full-length screenplay based on a slender short story by Daphne du Maurier. Their first draft went to an American director who suggested they write a more thrilling opening scene and it was thus that the death by drowning of the daughter became a seminal part of the movie which was eventually made. The shock cut, from Laura Baxter's scream at realizing her daughter is drowned to the howl of the drill into a crumbling wall in Venice, was written at this time, too, and became one of the most notable moments in the film which, in 2011, was nominated Best British Film of all time.

Just prior to offering it elsewhere, Scott and Bryant decided that there was a story lag somewhere in the middle of their screenplay. They came up with the notion that they should make the central character, John Baxter, an architectural restorer working in Venice (in the short story he was taking a brief holiday) and that the scaffolding within the church should collapse beneath him. From these oddly random considerations, the script began to coalesce and when Nic Roeg was chosen as director, they worked closely with him for several weeks, tightening the script and adding scenes and character detail.

Scott recalls that one day during this process of refinement with Roeg, the director came to their session with three hefty philosophical works under his arm, thrusting them upon the writers he said: "Here, read these -- they may help with that line of dialogue we're trying to improve." As for the famous love scene, Scott noted in later years: "The script said 'they make love.' Everything of that montage was devised by Nic and by the actors on a closed set. Nothing improper took place. I always study the bottle of Macallan whisky strategically placed on the bedside table and quaffed to celebrate their respective missions accomplished. It was the beginning of our campaign to launch The Macallan as a brand." (Which grew from a few hundreds per year to somewhere around a million today.)

Among Scott and Bryant's more eclectic projects was a children's book which they were asked to write by the singing star, Cat Stevens. He wanted a story to go along with his current album (Numbers) which was in preparation at a small recording studio deep in the forest north of Montreal. It was a happy collaboration with Stevens contributing several charming illustrations to the first chapter and the manuscript telling a happy tale about the invention of numbers. The album was issued but despite publishing companies expressing great interest, the book was never published. All rights are owned by the singing star, now known as Yusuf Islam.

Scott/Shiach became Chairman and Chief Executive of the malt whisky company, Macallan-Glenlivet in the late 1970's, having been instrumental in taking the company public a decade earlier. He held the chairman's role until 1996 when the company was acquired in a bid by two companies who claimed they were previously close corporate collaborators, a Scottish and a Japanese company, acting together. During the period of his chairmanship, Macallan-Glenlivet's market capitalization on the London Stock Exchange grew some four

hundredfold, its reputation for innovative and focused marketing and management helping to establish a highly successful international brand of malt whisky. While acknowledging the crucial importance of the role played by his colleagues in the hugely successful development of the brand, his view of the role of chairman was fairly rigorously observed: to help direct and create strategy, to select and assist senior management, to ensure good corporate governance and be a reliable and helpful sounding board. He always declared himself to be an indifferent negotiator, a role he quickly devolved to others. He was helpful and interested in all aspects of marketing and helped to oversee the prize-winning advertising campaigns for the brand.

Scott served for several years on the Broadcasting Council of BBC Scotland and in 1986 succeeded Sir Denis Forman as Chairman of the Scottish Film Production Fund. His subsequent chairmanship of the Scottish Film Council lasted for six years and was followed by the creation of a new, broadly-based body for the Scottish screen industries (the Film Archive, Media Education, Exhibition, Screen Locations and Production Fund, which he also chaired). He was appointed the first chairman of this new organisation named Scottish Screen, whose creation was a result of the initiative by SFC and the other boards which he chaired. Having thus been instrumental in setting this up, he agreed to chair the Interim Board which supervised the transition and consolidation.

He remained as chairman for a further year before stepping down in 1998, after twelve years of involvement with Scotland’s film making bodies. The several achievements of these public bodies were considerable. As principal funders of the Edinburgh International Film Festival, they also helped to establish "Movie Makers," an annual week-long series of seminars, devised to help advance the careers of Scottish writers, producers and directors. Scott's acquaintances helped to bring contributors to this seminar, ranging from Bill Forsyth to Volker Schlondorff, from William Goldman to Dick Clement and Ian LaFrenais; Stephen Frears, Nicolas Roeg, the entire production teams of hit TV series, overseas producers and writers as diverse as Jimmy McGovern and Paula Milne.

Aside from development funding for dozens of aspirant Scottish film makers, other initiatives which helped to improve the scene in Scotland were "Tartan Shorts" which funded film makers each to produce a short film (there were five to six made each year) so that their talents might be distributed and seen by a wider public. Ancillary to this were four- to five-minute shorts, also serving the same purpose, for which finance was secured from Scottish Television. The Scottish Film Archive was helped to a more secure financial base, and permanent premises built to house their invaluable national collection.

While continuing his career as a screenwriter and producer, he was also a director of both Caledonian Newspapers and Scottish Television plc and he was instrumental in helping to bring the two companies together. When they merged, to form SMG plc, he remained on the board for thirteen years. He was appointed a Governor of The British Film Institute in 1992 and served that Board for some six years. He is a former Chairman of The Writers’ Guild of Great Britain, thus perhaps the only person ever to chair a trades union and a Stock Exchange company at the same time.

He was Executive Producer of the thriller Shallow Grave (1992.) He also wrote and produced the BAFTA-nominated film, Regeneration (1997) as well as The Fourth Angel (2001.) He has written or co-written more than a dozen films, including The Awakening and five films directed by Nicolas Roeg: Don't Look Now (with Chris Bryant, 1974), Castaway (1986), The Witches (1990), Cold Heaven (1991) and Two Deaths (1995.) He was also co-writer of The Preacher's Wife (1996) and In Love and War (1997).

He originated and is the co-writer and co-producer of the stage musical adaptation of the 1990s film The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert which opened in Sydney in October 2006 and has since become the most successful Australian stage musical of all time, now seen by almost five million people and grossing some $306m. Productions of the show have run in London (for over three years), Broadway, Brazil, Italy and elsewhere. The Priscilla tours of the UK and USA confirm the show's status as a small showbiz cult (if "small" and "cult" are appropriate terms for a show which has earned more than £150m and been seen by 1.3 million people.) (www.priscillathemusical.com)

Under his real name (Allan Shiach) he has been awarded honorary doctorates by Napier University, Edinburgh (2007) and by Aberdeen University (2008). He has been married to his wife, Kathleen, for over 45 years. They have two sons and a daughter; they live in a small flat in London and have homes in the North of Scotland, where the yew-hedge maze is one of the largest in Europe and in the South of France where they grow vines for the local winemakers and several hundred litres of olive oil for the benefit of friends and family.

Building and restoring homes is one of their joint hobbies and over the years they have refurbished fabulous properties including the above mentioned estate in Scotland, a twenty five thousand square foot mansion; in London one of the prime houses in The Boltons purchased over the years floor by floor; in California a complete remodel doubling the size and then adding a guest house, second swimming pool and tennis court in Beverly Hills; they acquired Paul and Helen Hamlyn's house near Valbonne which they owned for only a few years and having re-decorated and enhanced was sold to a member of the Berlusconi family; an old Mill house in Gloucestershire was converted from a working factory to a large private home in the seventies and eighties, with a river and waterfall literally running through the entrance hall.

Their present real estate consists of a modest Georgian house in Gloucestershire and a former chateau now a prime olive and wine estate near St Tropez.

Future work projects include a stage production of Sophie's Choice, based on the novel by William Styron; a stage production of a new play by David Ambrose, Act Three; The Conjuror, a co-written thriller about a magician, due for an early UK production prior to Broadway; also a musical written by Herbert Kretzmer (Les Misérables) and adapted from The Admirable Crichton by J.M. Barrie; and two
film projects.

Addendum: In 2020, Allan Scott was credited as executive producer and co-creator of the wildly successful Netflix miniseries The Queen's Gambit. In the 1980s Allan had presciently acquired the rights to this property from the widow of novelist Walter Tevis. Several attempts to adapt it for television failed, including one that ended with Heath Ledger's untimely death.